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ABSTRACT

These proceedings of a UNESCO conference include the following papers: "Foreword," by Anne Fontaine; "Education and the Elderly in the Second Medium-Term Plan of UNESCO (1984-1989)," by Mir Sarfaraz Husain; "Introduction," by Genevieve Vaucher; "Part I: Adult Education and Aging," by Genevieve Vaucher; "Part II: Educational Programmes for and by the Elderly," by Colette Douriez; "Part III: Future Prospects and Recommendations," by Genevieve Vaucher; and "Conclusion," by Pierre Brasseul. A bibliography of works on education for older adults in France concludes the proceedings. (MN)

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FONDATION NATIONALE DE GÉRONTOLOGIE
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Education and the Elderly in France

Report for the Fourth International Conference on Adult Education

UNESCO
Paris - 19-29 March 1985

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« The development of Education for the Elderly », to quote Pierre Brasseul, *« is one of the significant phenomena of the end of this century in all industrialized countries »*.

Conscious of the above, and commending UNESCO for introducing a sub-programme associating *« education »* and *« third age »* * in its Second Medium Term Plan (1984-1989), the FNG (Fondation Nationale de Gérontologie) felt it was appropriate, especially in light of the forthcoming Fourth International Adult Education Conference, to look more deeply into this new phenomenon.

Thus at the FNG's invitation, about 40 experts in the fields of education and gerontology representing also institutions involved with the retired and elderly, accepted to work together on this subject in six seminars held at the Fondation from June 1984 to January 1985.

These seminars which stimulated a lot of thought and exchange of views produced a rich harvest of texts. The FNG has therefore decided to publish them in their entirety in the 33rd. issue of its quarterly *« Gérontologie et Société »* later this year. These texts have served in the preparation of this Report which was presented at a Symposium organized jointly by the FNG and the ICSG (International Center of Social Gerontology) at Versailles on March 12, 1985.

We are most grateful to the French National Commission to UNESCO for supporting the recommendations contained in this Report, which will be circulated to the delegates attending the Fourth International Adult Education Conference.

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* In place of the term *« Third Age »*, which is not considered a valid definition, we have preferred to use the synonymous terms *« elderly »*, *« older adult (s) »*, and *« older person (s) »*, in the context of this Report.

EDUCATION AND THE ELDERLY IN THE SECOND MEDIUM TERM PLAN OF UNESCO (1984 - 1989)

The Second Medium Term Plan of UNESCO for the years 1984 - 1989, which is the result of an unprecedented collaboration between the 158 Member States, 19 Inter-governmental and 83 Non-governmental organizations, was adopted by the General Conference at its fourth extraordinary session in November/December 1982.

The Plan has been designed essentially to chart a general course for UNESCO and is not a detailed programme of action. It is based on an intersectoral and multidisciplinary analysis of world problems and structured around *five missions* which in turn are divided into *14 Major programmes*.

The second major programme, « *Education for all* », the purpose of which is to enable all - children and adults - to gain access to an education adequate in quantity and appropriate in quality, is of special interest to us as it also deals with « Education and the elderly ».

In the analysis of the problems introducing this major programme, UNESCO has highlighted certain points which are appropriate to the work we have undertaken. It is UNESCO's view that education today is in large measure inseparable from lifelong education conceived as a continuous process that begins with initial education, and extends *throughout an individual's lifetime*. In this context, efforts have been made to ensure that educational systems not only open their doors to persons who have not had access to schools or universities, but also to prepare individuals for the various stages of life. A host of new ventures are being initiated on behalf of retired people. These are leading, for example, to the establishment of universities for the elderly and other new forms of out-of-school education. Thus, adults of all ages, educational backgrounds and occupations are being encouraged to resume their education. Adult education is beginning to take on a new dimension : it is ceasing to be regarded merely as a back-up education

for those whose initial training has been inadequate and is starting to become a normal phase in the development of a career, an important element of personal fulfilment and, even, a new aspect of the *right to education*.

This programme is divided into six parts :

1) Promotion of General Access to Education ;
2) Democratization of Education ;
3) *Adult Education* ;
4) Equality of Educational Opportunity for Girls and Women ;
5) Extension and improvement of Education of particular groups ;
6) Promotion of the right to education of particular groups.

Paragraph 2048 of the Third Part, « Adult Education » has retained our interest : « Increased life expectancy is beginning to have a considerable impact on the life of societies. According to present estimates, in the year 2000 the number of people aged 60 and over will have risen by 71 per cent as compared with 1975. There will then be almost 600 million people in the world in this age group, or about 10 per cent of the world population, two-thirds of whom will be living in the developing countries. As well as raising numerous ethical, sociological, economic and cultural issues, this phenomenon also has a number of educational implications. There is an urgent need to re-examine the place and role of elderly people in society and to promote activities which will not only improve their situation but will also, in the most appropriate ways, give the societies of which they are members the benefit of their long experience ».

The actions taken under this Programme are organized around the four aspects of adult life reflected in the following sub-programmes :

The first, *Adult Education and Work*, seeks to facilitate entry into the world of work, in-service training and retraining while in employment. Special emphasis is laid on arrangements allowing for alternate periods of study and work ;

The second, *Adult Education and the Exercise of Civil Rights*, attempts to familiarize adults with their rights as citizens, stimulate their awareness of civic responsibilities and encourage their effective involvement in the management of community affairs ;

The third, *Adult Education, Leisure and Culture*, is to promote educational activities contributing to the full development of living conditions and the raising of the cultural level of societies as a whole ;

The fourth, *Education and Late Life*, which is very much the central theme of our reflections, is to contribute to the implementation of the International Plan of Action adopted by the 1982 World Assembly on Aging, and activities relating to adult education and the elderly are to be undertaken. These activities are to be related to preparation for retirement, educational activities for the elderly and training for the necessary staff. Special emphasis was laid, however, on making use of the potential which the elderly represent for meeting the educational, social and cultural needs of society.

The Second Medium Term Plan to which we have referred above reflects the evolution of UNESCO's interest with regard to the elderly dating back to the 1950's. It was, however, at the 18th. General Conference in 1974 that « Education for the Elderly » was officially introduced into the Regular Programme of the Organization, and subsequent General Conferences have reinforced this commitment. It was thus the guidelines in the Second Medium Term Plan relating to « Education in Later Life » which have been put into operation in the Programme and Budget for 1984-1985, approved by the 22nd. General Conference in October/November 1983.

INTRODUCTION

THE ELDERLY IN FRANCE (1)

On March 4, 1982, the population of Metropolitan France was 54,331,871 of which 10,023,740 were in the age group of 60 years and above. Since the 1975 Census there has been a slight decline in these age groups in relation to the total population (18.5 % in 1982, against 18.9 % in 1975).

On the other hand, there is confirmation of a regular increase in the numbers of the very old (75 years and above) : 3,560,000 (6.6 % of the total population) compared to 2,960,000 (or 5.6 % of the total population) in 1975. This evolution should be seen in relation to the increase in the life span : from 1970-1980, life expectancy at 60 years has increased from 16.2 to 17.3 years for men ; and from 20.8 to 22.4 years for women.

Women are clearly in the majority among the elderly, since they globally represent 61 % of the population of those 65 years and above and 75 % of those of 85 years and above.

(1) The Elderly in France : Returns of the 1982 Census, *Informations Rapides*, SESI, n° 35, June 15, 1984, Ministère des Affaires Sociales et de la Solidarité Nationale, Paris.

There has been little variation in matrimonial structures since the 1975 Census : men over 65 are more often married (73 %) than widowed (16.8 %) while the contrary is true for women of the same age (35 % are married and 53 % are widowed).

One notices a clear fluctuation in the levels of activity : it has decreased from 51 % in 1962 to 30.2 % in 1982 for the 60-64 year group ; for the group 65 years and above it has declined sharply from 17.5 % in 1962 to 3.3 % in 1982.

It should also be stressed that the elderly are more concentrated in the rural areas and small towns than in the large cities : nearly a quarter of the rural population are over 60 years of age compared to only 17 % in urban areas.

The largest concentration of the elderly is found in the southern half of France, where according to the last Census, the population growth has been more pronounced.

*

* *

It is difficult to forecast the future evolution in life styles, and the cultural and educational habits of the elderly. Yet, one should expect changes which may result from the effect on the older generation. The septuagenarians of today have set habits. As for the sexagenarians of tomorrow, they will have experienced conditions of « modern life » and their level of attainment will be higher. The « Oldsters » of Year 2000 will indeed be very different to their counterparts today.

As a matter of fact, if all the elderly of today had received 12 years of compulsory schooling, the young and early-retired (55 - 65 years) are the first generation to have benefited from free secondary education (Law of 1930). On the other hand, they were between 41 and 51 years old when the Law of July 16, 1971 (on Permanent Training) was promulgated, which meant that only a few of them were able to benefit from it (except through participation in Preparation for Retirement seminars), since more of the younger salaried workers had more opportunities for training than the older ones.

This simple data highlights the gap that exists in our older population today : though the younger have had the benefit of a longer and more regular education in their youth than their older peers, they have not taken much advantage of the adult training facilities to which they were legally entitled. The future generations of retired persons (10 years from now) will not hesitate to profit from this opportunity which will no doubt result in differing educational and cultural habits during their retirement.

EDUCATION « FOR » ... OR EDUCATION « AND »

When we speak about education, we do so with the idea that every individual has certain inherent potentials, aptitudes and capacities which may remain latent or find expression depending on one's surroundings and life situation. An arbitrary breakdown of these reveals several educational dimensions :

- the physical - physical and sexual education ;
- the intellectual - schooling/professional life ;
- the ethical - moral, civic or religious education ;
- the affective - role of the family, then of inter-personal relationships.

All these are not separate from each other. They intermingle or may be interpreted individually which makes the classification of educational and cultural activities difficult. It is on account of this problem that this Report will try to avoid such distinctions, which have been presented here to stress that *these dimensions exist at all stages of life with variations specific to each phase of an individual's development.*

Programme I.3 : « Adult Education » in Unesco's Medium Term Plan (1984-1989), consists of 4 sub-programmes. A grammatical analysis of their titles shows us the structural differences in themes, hence their meaning, through the use of either « for », or « and » :

- Education *for* Adults and the world of work ;
- Education *for* Adults and exercise of rights ;
- Education *of* Adults, leisure and culture ;
- Education *and* the Third Age.

The transition from « *for* » to « *and* » is not without significance. Put differently, in all logic the first three sub-programmes globally constitute « Adult Education ». The fourth as it is written, does not. It covers a much vaster domain than the other three, which are limited by the use of the term « Adult Education », while the fourth focuses on adults as learners, and as educators.

If it is to be included with the first three « Adult Education » sub-programmes, the fourth needs to be interpreted differently. Two plausible ways are possible, differing in meaning, leading to different but complimentary educational practices :

- *« Adult Education and aging »*. Thus drawn up, all four sub-programmes are rigorously coherent and in rapport with each other. As such, the development of educational programmes will above all be preventive in nature ; or,
- *« Education for the Elderly »*. This version makes the retired and elderly a sub-group of « adults ». In this context we take into account all the potentials of aging persons.

Next, one should assess the existing structures or opportunities in this domain responding to a desire for education, and recommend those which need to be developed.

Whether we retain one or the other version, or both, one aspect of education does not appear, namely, educational situations in which the retired and elderly are not « learners » but « educators », except self-educators or educators of their peers.

Would another way out of this labyrinth arising from these different criteria not be to eliminate altogether the fourth sub-programme title and to introduce the notion of aging into the first three sub-themes ? That is, showing the effects that aging can have on the relationship between work and adults, thereby proposing a better adaptation of jobs to the age of individuals ... ; the effects of aging (and reaching retirement) on the newly acquired leisure/free time etc... ; indeed a difficult undertaking at present, but towards which we must (in the long term) strive.

When reviewing successful educational programmes for the retired persons, it would be difficult to ignore the above (aspect) simply by reasoning logically. Whether it is a question of developing structures to facilitate the access of consenting retired and elderly, including those in institutions (for whom this may prove more difficult) to more culture, or making other proposals or recommendations in their behalf, it is equally important to promote their role as educators of younger generations. In this way, « *post-figurative* » culture would continue to co-exist with the developing « *co-figurative* » and « *pre-figurative* » models (2). A society which is able to assure an equilibrium between

(2) From the point of view of Margaret MEAD : « ... Here then are three types of culture that I propose to distinguish - *postfigurative*, in which children are instructed above all by their parents ; *cofigurative*, in which children like adults learn from their peers ; and the *prefigurative*, in which adults also learn from their children ». MEAD (Margaret) : « *Le Fossé des Générations* », Pierre Denoël/Gonthier, 1979.

these three models is perhaps, ideally, one worth preserving. Thus, each individual despite his age would actively contribute towards the cultural enrichment of his country both by teaching others as well as learning from them.

The above analysis was necessary in order to have a clearer understanding of the fourth sub-programme's place in relation to the three others ; to understand the emerging educational preoccupations of a specific group which were few, until recently, largely for demographic reasons. Time given to raising consciousness on these new problems will have been well spent if it were to continue towards the desegregation of the elderly and assure their integration in the world of adults, bearing in mind their particular characteristics.

GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into three parts :

- Part one, « **Adult Education and Aging** », proposes a re-draft of the Fourth Sub-programme. It was felt that the inclusion of information on the process of aging in short and medium term educational policies is important, and it is hoped that Unesco will consider the *integration of this dimension* in its general Adult Education programme. Few concrete examples of programmes in this domain exist. It is our intent here to show *why* and *how* Adult Education and Education of the Elderly are not two separate fields, but on the contrary, closely inter-dependant ones : after all the elderly are older adults. Between the two, there is or ought to be *continuity* and place for the *specific characteristics* of older learners.

- Part two, reviews **the existing « Educational Programmes** *« for »* **and** *« by »* **the Elderly »** in France. Not all the retired persons, however, participate in these programmes as the educational and cultural centres offering them are either situated far from their homes, or because they are simply not motivated by them. Even if the Mass Media, especially radio and television, were mobilized, it is not at all certain if their programmes would (both from the programmers' and the audiences' view) have an « educational » orientation. The other educational programmes in France sometimes concern only a fraction of people aged 60 and above. These programmes are presented here only to give an idea of their variety. It should also be noted that programmes offered in towns are not necessarily applicable at the village level and vice versa. Neither should the younger retired be proposed programmes designed for the dependent older

persons. This clearly indicates the existence of disparities in these educational and cultural programmes, and any attempt to reduce them by their strandardization on the pretext of creating equality of opportunity for everyone would be unrealistic.

Lastly, Part three, presents the « **Future Prospects and Recommendations** » concerning the participation and involvement of the retired and the elderly of France, if they wish it, in cultural and educational programmes, like youth and younger adults in their usual environment, and on the understanding that the specific characteristics of their age will not be ignored. They would be even less so, if information on the process of aging and its effects were considered in the conception and planning of Adult Education.

PART ONE

ADULT EDUCATION AND AGING

For a long time we have brushed aside the changes that the process of aging induces in an individual during the course of his adult life, compared to the phases of childhood and adolescence in which the transformations are so clearly marked, that in our thinking over several centuries we no longer assimilate the child with the man, but conserve intact the characteristics of each age group. The current technological changes and structural modifications in the economic world linked to other phenomena are exploding the so-called « equilibrium of adulthood, showing that a 30 year old adult will not be the same at 50 years », thus obliging one to consider the (ambiguous) concept of age as a variable influencing the activities, life styles and especially the educational habits of individuals over their total life span.

As an evolving process, *aging* produces changes in human beings and material things under the influence above all of the passage of time, starting with conception : a process which leads more or less rapidly in later life to the state « *old age* » the threshold of which has never been established. Preparation must equally take place on the physical, psychological and social levels for old age from early childhood to adulthood, since the process of aging can be accelerated especially by work which is not commensurate with one's capacity and age. Adult Education must take into account such changes in individuals, which are linked to the passage of time, as much in the areas designated by Unesco in the four Sub-programmes, as well as in the more subjective field of the individual's relationship with his own aging.

With regard to the world of work, French society in the last decade has undergone very important transformations with the world economic crisis. No sector has been spared. Nevertheless, two urgent

questions need to be asked of Adult Education as well as of the economic sectors which are in recession or expansion :

First, if one can, *how does one adapt work to an individual's age* within a company by, for example, a policy of differentiated training ?

Secondly, *how does one train the young and those no longer young* who will be forced to change their job and employment sector in the years to come ?

These questions outline the entire problem of professional adaptation within and outside the workplace, in relation to one's age, their physical capacities, resistance to effort, experience, ability and aptitude. This involves Adult Education even though it might appear to be more in keeping with the limited field of Professional Training :

- Although little statistical evidence exists in France as yet, *it would seem that older adults follow fewer training courses offered within the framework of the Law of July 16, 1971 on Permanent Training*, on such assumptions like : « It is not at my age that I am going to learn » ; « It is too late for me »... ! Several dated surveys illustrate this phenomenon. After reaching the age of 40, both males and females follow fewer courses in the framework of Professional Training (3).

- This attitude is reinforced by *the existing age limits imposed by society for taking competitive examinations*, after which age it would seem an individual is no longer capable.

- *Many persons* including trainers and managers, *believe that over the age of 40 it is not possible for an individual to begin training in the Computer Sciences or other new technologies*. In spite of the contrary being proved through experiments conducted by organizations such as « RETRAVAILLER » (Work Again) which have trained 40 to 50 year old women without previous experience in Computer Technology, who have subsequently found jobs in this field.

- In the years to come, the average age of salaried workers is going to rise on account of the evolution in the age pyramid of the active population. *We must, therefore, train a much older population beyond the initial basic stages than the present*. Very few training organizations have really adapted to the age and rhythm of their trainees since they continue to operate on a « model » trainee profile of 18-25 years, while accepting older trainees.

(3) GADREY-TURPIN N. : « Hommes et Jeunes devant la formation professionnelle continue » *Education Permanente* n° 68 ; juin 1983.

Adult Education must, therefore, in the context of the world of work, attempt to modify these negative stereotypes which ignore experience acquired over years of work. They merely highlight the obsolescence of technical know-how (which has become out-dated and inadapted to the actual conditions of production as a result of accelerated technological changes). Thus, what is in fact the point of telling the retired and elderly that they still have the time to improve themselves now, when 10 or 15 years earlier Society already did not consider them capable of learning, and as such, reinforced their individual beliefs. Could one assume today that by *the introduction of the dimension of aging in Adult Education*, one could bridge the gap between the working population struggling to keep pace with change, and the inactive older population which (at last) has time to cultivate itself ? This dichotomy makes culture a superfluous, luxury product for inactive persons (retired persons, housewives...) who are involved more in an education for their leisure.

On the other hand, for over 20 years in France, specialized official Committees have concentrated on the negative consequences of the period of old age, owing to a majority of men and women who do the same type of work from the moment they leave school until their retirement. With the result that for a major part of their existence, they are not well adapted to their work which is changing in character. To counter this, at every age of life there ought to be a certain corresponding type of flexibly defined activity adapted to individual circumstances. This would create an important role for Permanent Training, conceived to initiate change, to enable the aging individuals find another form of activity (4). This object could be realized by developing the preventive aspects of work medicine.

Adult Education therefore has an important role to play in the process of industrial reorganization now underway by (a) helping to find solutions to adjust jobs to individual requirements, (b) providing a better definition of jobs in relation to age, aptitude and ability, (c) promoting the organization and *distribution of work « à la carte »*, (d) providing the necessary conditions to give effect to the notion of *retirement « à la carte »* (5) ; All of these conditions may help to discover premature aging caused by the stress and strain of work which produces physical and mental exhaustion resulting in the retired being incapable of benefiting and making plans for cultural activities, creating new relationships (and activities).

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(4) Interventions of P. LAROQUE, M. LUCAS and X. GAULLIER in a Colloquium : « *Time Chosen, New Retirement, Sharing of Work* », CLEIRRPA, Paris 1983.

(5) Cf. Previous reference

The question of free-time and culture which have been under consideration in France for sometime, is today taking on special importance owing to a combination of factors. On the one hand, the economic crisis has contributed to rising unemployment with people retiring or being terminated at much earlier ages than before ; while on the other hand, the advent of new technologies and consequent reorganization are likely to result in a diminution of « work-time », hence more « free-time » or leisure for individuals. We are, in fact, rapidly heading towards a Society in which individuals are going to have more time on their hands, which some may well want to spend on others. The different modalities for leaving the world of work that have existed in France for many years mean that, after reaching the age of 55 years, a fairly large number of persons who are out of work today, will never work again ! The other possibility, which a number of organizations are resorting to, is part-time work, or work on « mutually agreed time » basis, usually employed for younger women workers. Furthermore, the generalization of a fifth week of paid leave, and the ever increasing periods of technical lay-offs in many a profession in economic difficulty, are inducing adults well before their age of retirement to think seriously about utilizing this free-time. A time which they will most certainly have to learn to manage if they expected noticeable changes in retirement. Experience has shown that older persons often shy away from initiating any activity, largely because they do not know how to go about it. Perhaps, the elderly of tomorrow, who will have been trained from early adulthood, would be in a better position to act on their own.

Today's life styles, like the cultural models, have conditioned individuals into accepting ready-made solutions to occupy their free-time, rather than encouraging in them a sense of autonomy. Any resistance to change on the part of the elderly is merely a reflection of their past experience in a world of work which was mechanical, authoritarian and sclerosing.

One of the new developments resulting from the lowering of retirement age is that the younger retired are beginning to voice their aspirations hence obliging the conventional associations and other organizations to revise their cultural and educational policies. The financially well-off « young » and « early » retired persons are often solicited to remain in the cultural and educational mainstream of their communities. Some of the activities proposed to them include trips, positions as « auxiliary trainers » for youth ill-adapted in professional life ; as professional and voluntary consultants to developing countries ; and as club managers to replace the older retiring ones ... For the voluntary work they represent a potential source of future

experts. But their commitments are fewer than the numerous demands made on their time. Although they continue to participate in social and cultural life, they are more selective in their choice of activities than the much older retired in usually not accepting everything that is offered to the latter. They firmly reject the notion of age as a factor of unification and segregation and more often join the ordinary « pétanque » (bowling) clubs, libraries or any other association open to all age groups in their communities, than clubs exclusively for the elderly even if the latter have libraries or bowling groups. They do not consider the criteria of age a priority, but have a preference for ordinary educational, cultural activities and hobbies, which again is new when seen in the context of former habits and practices of retired persons. In fact, very few of the early-retired in France or elsewhere, desire to continue « actively » to contribute their long experience and professional competence in the general field of education, especially on account of the complicated and strict regulations governing the payment of unemployment benefits to those among them who have not been legally retired. And also because the voluntary movement in France is not so developed as the one in the Anglo-saxon countries for all age groups.

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If Adult Education were to seriously consider the integration of aging, it must take into account **the relationship an individual has with his own future**. Since the negative images of aging representing a series of irreversible losses begin to form from early childhood, Adult Education can do much to help people better understand all the other different aspects of the process which also exist. Sensitizing people generally to the above dual function, which is contradictory in appearance, should create the conditions necessary for a better and longer personal autonomy, especially for older adults who may be confronted with the painful situation of their own physically and mentally ill or handicapped parents.

It is from their early childhood that individuals live not only their own old age but also that of their relatives. Educational action should aim at making people more attentive to their own aging, help them live in harmony with other generations, take themselves in hand in order to lead more meaningful lives in spite of this becoming increasingly difficult with advancing years.

The integration of Aging into Adult Education also implies learning to live alone. This would necessitate the development of educational programmes on solitude in the context of the life span, a notion which is by no means incongruous to living in the larger community or in a couple. It is important to learn to live with oneself from childhood, which means learning to dialogue with oneself ; a feat which conditions of modern life make increasingly difficult. To age, is to be condemned into a greater degree of silence, for instance, by the gradual disappearance of people from one's age group : « I feel a vacuum engulfing me ! » It is essential to know how to cope with this solitude from early adulthood in order to avoid being trapped later in despair.

This continuity in the education of young, then older adults is based on the premise that human life is a continuum laid out in various steps, and not a sequence of totally isolated phases. The heterogeneity of cultural and educational activities is certainly influenced by the age of individuals, and even more so by their present and former social or socio-professional background. The vitality of clubs, associations of the elderly and other similar agencies is clear evidence of the strong desire of retired persons for professional recognition, and of the need to belong to such bodies. Furthermore, it would be illusory to attempt to create a homogeneous group of the retired and elderly divorced from younger adults while acknowledging the fact that their culture has largely been determined by their professional life.

On the question of both educational programmes and cultural consumption, *pedagogy for older adults* does not entail any particular approach, except greater attention to the pace, quality and clarity of instruction, which could also be beneficial to younger groups if they were used more often. There is no plausible psycho-pedagogical reason to separate adults on the basis of the pivotal age of 60 or 65 years. It would be erroneous to assume that adults have difficulty in learning as they advance in age. On the contrary, they just learn differently, and start doing so well before they reach 60 years. No one, in fact, learns in the same way at, say, ten, twenty, thirty - five or fifty years ! This essential and unifying dimension of Permanent Education for adults must also *safeguard the interests of the very old*. The present and future generations of the retired and elderly have a common generational history, in which they not only identify themselves but have also contributed together in the making of it. Adult Education could not possibly ignore this aspect of our Cultural Heritage which the retired and elderly represent, by simply discarding it on the pretext of assuring « continuity » rather than capitalizing on them for the benefit of Society.

On the other hand, the pressures of a youth-dominated work and consumer-oriented society have reduced many older persons into thinking of themselves a a minority living out a marginal existence. to combat this calls for a very special educational approach that will help these afflicted older adults out of the soul-destroying syndrome of agism. Nor must the other very important question of the very old dependent elderly be passed off in silence. Aging may be accompanied by a number of distressing complications, which may lead to *a growing social, emotional, and physical dependance*, particularly the very old living in institutions, to whom special attention must be given through the establishment of educational programmes.

Education for retirement, or for aging must no longer be initiated at the last minute as a remedial measure when someone reaches his sixties. It is in the interest of their respective futures that all educational systems, individuals, political leaders, schools, universities, industries, the media, in sum, the larger community, should begin to have a clearer understanding of the « growth-aging » dynamic, as a process which starts with birth and continues throughout one's life span.

PART TWO

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES *FOR* AND *BY* THE ELDERLY

The transition from thought to action, from theory to practice, from a global educational policy for a specific age group, to dispersed, fragmented experimental and tested programmes, is to discover a vast yet imprecise panorama of a multitude of activities. Nevertheless, only a limited number of older adults will be involved in them.

Some of these programmes are part of the existing educational resources offered to people of all ages over a stipulated period of time, other than that spent in apprenticeship, on-the-job, or in maternity. The others, are geared more to very specific needs, for example, changing one's life style, fulfilling one's aspirations, acquiring renewing or reviewing knowledge, to give new meaning and quality to life by realizing one's potentials in a spirit of discovery. They are also available to all persons who have lost their autonomy and are dependant on other people or unfamiliar institutions, and to whom they are a hope for rehabilitation and eventual social reintegration in an open milieu.

In France, while this particular educational programme, like the others accompanying it, appears to have been conceived « *for* » older adults, there was always the underlying hope that it would in the short term be run « *by* » them, even sometimes « *with* » them. One of the important areas for research, however, remains the development of a multidisciplinary approach in Gerontology « about » them.

EDUCATION IN PREPARATION « FOR » AND « DURING » RETIREMENT

The termination of professional activity, whether it is by choice or out of compulsion, is being experienced much earlier than before in the lives of aging adults. It is a trend which risks creating unfavourable

conditions immediately upon retirement or in the years following it, for example, disengagement, loss of social status, isolation, introversion, demoralization..., all of which may have negative consequences on the normal physical and psychical development of individuals.

Among the educational models in use for several years in the context of prevention, are the « Preparation for Retirement » programmes which assist and orient the future retired people into optimizing their time in retirement. At the beginning, these programmes were not well received as it is the case of many innovations for which long years are necessary for their acceptance, largely because attitudes change slowly. Must these, however, remain the only preventive or reorientation training programmes offered to salaried or retired workers ?

Generally offered to workers by their employers or by specially created associations during the last five years of professional life, these programmes are beginning to attract a growing public, but it is regrettable that financial allocations for Permanent Education today are reserved only for the retraining of salaried workers. For all persons who have neither had information nor the time or inclination to profit from such preparation for retirement programmes, several other possibilities exist to help them learn different things that would assure a fuller and more rewarding existence. To satisfy their hunger for knowledge, through self-directed learning (in which the Mass Media and general literature have a major responsibility), formal, non-formal and informal educational structures are undergoing rapid expansion with the establishment of both private and public sponsored specialized, multidisciplinary and multipurpose centres, some especially for the retired and elderly while the others are inter-generational ; in sum, places where people can satisfy some of their aspirations.

It would, in fact, be appropriate here to emphasize an aspect of training for those retired which opens up new horizons for Permanent Education in its entirety, namely, the various manifestations in the trend towards *individual or collective self-education*, on the three levels that follow :

1- *The socio-pedagogical*, includes different methods of self-organization, even *self-management of educational and cultural institutions* for the retired persons to show what self-directed learning for the adults of tomorrow would be from the institutions' point of view, the management and organization of training facilities by the trainees themselves ;

2 - *The pedagogical* : the experience of existing self-directed training groups has confirmed the feasibility of undertaking learning projects in common (training, reflection, research), to independently plan and execute training sessions, using outside expertize whenever necessary ;

3 - *The psycho-pedagogical* : the ability of individuals to manage their own learning project, which is very often the case for thousands of retired learners, shows that *the will to learn* is independent of the more limited functional or professional objectives.

This *liberation of the desire to learn* upon retirement is the fundamental basis for the self-directed training of groups (level 2), or for organizations (level 1). It should also be noted that a large number of older adults have no need of structures as they have a rich cultural background and an adequate social and affective milieu. For them, learning by itself is a pleasure, a challenge to explore new forms of personal expression, increase their knowledge in such diverse fields as music, reading, manual work... activities which are rarely available in institutions, but which should nevertheless be preserved and helped to develop.

On the other hand, many others remain marginal for such reasons as trying to survive with barely sufficient means, lack of information on the different cultural activities available, or simply because they are not interested. As they grow older, they are increasingly faced with bereavements, separations, changes in life styles for which they may often need moral support and encouragement, which they may accept or feel equally free to reject.

EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURES AND ESTABLISHMENTS

These educational infrastructures and establishments are both varied, on the increase and undergoing a slow yet steady geographic decentralization. They are, furthermore, opening their doors to a more diverse public, extending their regular programmes, and also introducing innovative ones. The elderly, handicapped, dependent and even the disoriented persons are no longer excluded from such establishments and the hospitals are also widening their activities to include cultural and educational programmes. By no means should these developments hide the deficiencies, irresponsibility, shortsightedness, taboos, and refusals... !

1 - *Universities and Older Adults*

The opening up of universities to the older adults may appear an innovation. However, a majority of them have always accepted non-degree students as auditors from every generation provided they had place for them. Nevertheless, the Permanent Education infrastructures (1971) have opened up a vast new potential for older adults by creating special reception and counselling services to orient them to programmes especially designed for them (1973), and also to regular university courses for degree taking students. But the range of activities have been limited owing to lack of space, number of university towns, and the impossibility of creating new posts for instructors. To this may be added the negative stereotype of university training being labeled elitist, which may scare many a potential older learner whose access to culture has been limited. Certain new experiments conducted with members of Retired Workers Pension Funds have proved a great success.

The educational programmes most in demand today are, courses in languages, history, geography, fine arts, archeology, biology, medicine, economics and different types of research, but excluding fundamental research.

In constant evolution since 1973, this innovative idea has made headway not only in France, but also in many other countries. However, like other innovative approaches, it has had its own risks and limitations. By no means should it be considered a universal panacea for the aging of individuals or populations, and it is certainly not an indicator of the cultural level of a country, nor that of its older citizens. It should not be considered the only model solution, as it may risk brushing aside other existing activities which are probably more appropriate to the needs of individuals at the grass-roots level, or training a segregative elite of the least well-off and all others who have been left out of this educational spectrum. Inspite of these risks, the results have been very positive in revealing hidden talents and potentials, and also in reorienting individuals' aspirations. As such, these programmes are the vehicles for human progress.

In France, dozens of universities under differing and evolving names (University of Third Age, U3A, University for Free-Time, Open University, University for All, Inter-Age University...) are reinforcing their action by establishing annexes in smaller towns, cultural centres and colleges. These annexes, or centres of learning, represent the new model of cultural clubs in cities which do not have a university.

2 - *Associations and Movements for the Retired Persons and the Elderly*

Founded in 1901, the Associative Movement in France is only a prolongation of earlier informal groups which used to provide individuals opportunities for participating in and initiating social, convivial, and creative activities *with* and *for* others.

This Movement began to have an impact on the elderly when their increasing numbers began to congregate in fellowships of retired workers, veterans, former trade unionists, inter-generational groupings (old boys, sports or professional associations...). More recently, the clubs, associations and federations of the (urban and rural) retired persons have widened the range of action of associations in general. Moreover, a further dimension has been added with the creation of the semi-official National and Departmental Committees for Retired Persons and the Elderly, which have succeeded to the Departmental Information Committees for Retired Persons and the Elderly.

This type of associative life has led some older adults into setting up educational programmes which they are managing themselves. Certain associations are enlarging the scope of what were narrow-based programmes for their personal well-being (material, physical and at times segregational), to attract a much wider public, especially the least well-off members of their generation, the unemployed, young people in difficulty, and the handicapped. They feel that in offering their services to the community, they are fulfilling their obligations as committed citizens, and their role as artisans of social life.

The rapid evolution of a part of the Associative Movement in addition to the dynamic assertion of its rights, shows that it is also engaged in the planning and execution of educational, cultural and sports activities « for » and « by » older adults.

As such, the association, like the university and club, is assuming the role of an educational establishment in which training programmes are adapted, to meet the needs of individuals at different levels of hierarchal responsibility (decision making, organization, management, relations, animation...) ; and to different techniques and technologies.

3 - *Clubs in the Rural and Urban Milieux*

The 1950's saw the birth of a new associative and convivial model in France, based on one which had already been tried out in the Nordic and Anglo-saxon countries. Hence, the use of the term « club »,

which in concept and content far surpasses the negative and degrading conotation acquired by the « home for the aged » over the years, and is more in tune with the new image the elderly want to project of themselves.

These new meeting places have been made available to the retired adults and the elderly by private associations, municipalities, pension funds and mutual benefit societies. Though slow at the outset, they are now firmly established and thriving particularly in rural areas where their expansion has been most remarkable.

According to the last Census (1982), there were 20,000 clubs in open or closed (collective sheltered housing) milieux, serving almost 2 million retired persons. Nevertheless, their membership represents only a fraction of the older population of 60 years and above.

From its creation, the club has been a privileged « centre for social and educational activity » where the retired could gather to find friendship, solidarity, security, and social status... in a world grown hostile and indifferent. Here, they could rest, regain confidence, and rediscover a social life they had lost in disengaging from the world of work.

With the years, the models of the clubs have continued to diversify and undergo expansion in regard to their situation, membership, social milieu, level of culture, aspirations, and competence. They are now being implanted in residences and homes for the elderly where the residents themselves are taking over their management after being trained by (young and adult) trainers especially brought in for the task. This very closed milieu from its origins, is now opening up to the exterior with the establishment of reception services, organized exchanges and group activities.

Certain clubs, conscious of the risks of their « sclerosing » owing to the aging and consequent inaction of their members, are not only launching new educational programmes, but also grouping in federations at the canton and national levels.

Some of these new educational programmes include, the acquisition of new knowledge or the transmission of ancient knowledge, the creation of inter-generational contacts (particularly with children and youth), the provision of workshops for interested young retired workers as well as for others with free-time (housewives, the unemployed, the handicapped of all ages). In the near future, it is probable that new clubs specialized in particular fields or groups of activities will

develop. These could well be educational, cultural and sports centres which will offer, on their own premises or on the outside, programmes in all disciplines, new technologies and will also propose many activities for the dependent elderly in their homes or in their institutions. (One must stress this last point as the number of the very old will continue to increase in the coming years).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND SPORTS PROGRAMMES

It was only in May 1984, during a Colloquium on « *Culture and Third Age* » that representatives of the Secretariat of State for the Aging, and later the Secretariat of State for Youth and Sports, jointly made some proposals of interest for the retired adults and the elderly.

Education, culture and sport, taken individually or together, are in theory and practice three gateways for the prevention, slowing down and combatting the development of an accelerated aging. These programmes have also recently been made available to persons suffering from progressive loss of autonomy, spatial or temporal disorientation, even dementia, who have been relegated to institutions where they are condemned to marking time and oblivion !

These new programmes are part of already existing activities which were spontaneously initiated by the retired adults and are open to a wide public, even if a majority are not aware of their existence or refuse them. Their object is to go beyond the very narrow intellectual context (which is the reserve of an elite) and give preference to self-directed learning and self realization. They are mainly designed for people with vocations who enjoy involving themselves in activities, are motivated and achievement-oriented both in search of knowledge in varied fields, or transmitters of it.

1 - *Individual Projects*

In most cases, these projects consist of subjects such as the art of (everyday) living and utilization of time in retirement, for instance, skills development to enable them to renovate their own housing or immediate environment. Time on one's hand is sometimes an opportunity to cultivate a taste for refined cuisine, a concern for one's physical fitness and good health, and also a desire to renew closer family ties with one's scattered family. Many an activity, impossible during the active working life, surface at the time of retirement. They

may remain out of reach for many without assistance from qualified persons to counsel and orient them to existing possibilities, distance of centres from their homes may damp their enthusiasm, turning motivation into discouragement and apathy. Other retired persons cumulate handicaps and are resigned to solitude.

Although individual projects do exist, they are dispersed and divided :

- Cultural animation at home (readers, book loans and cassettes for the blind or semi-blind, a choice of radio and television programmes, painting and sculpture) ;
- Practical skills development (hobbies, carpentry..., using new electric or electronic household gadgets) ;
- Gymnastics or readaptation to daily gestures and movements ;

Many volunteers bring their know-how and skills (associations for the retired persons and other organizations) and are assisted by professionals.

Self-directed learning, « auto-education » in French, both individual or in group has an important place in the lives of certain retired persons, stemming largely from their professional training, job, personal cultural background. At the time of their retirement they prefer to adopt a new life style to new choices.

2 - *Collective or Group Education « for » or « by » Older Adults*

The demand for education by the retired adults *as their right*, is a new development in France and concerns only a minority of the elderly. Apart from being offered in universities, this education for the attainment of new knowledge or the up-dating of what one already knows, is also being decentralized to rural areas wishing to implement such innovative programmes for all age groups.

Many of the retired older adults asking for such group learning activities principally for their own development may, once they have acquired new knowledge, want to transmit it to others, thus becoming potential resources or « educators » for people in homes, groups, clubs, associations or institutions.

Until about 1970, a number of projects of this type were initiated « for » the elderly of a particular generation, many of whom were ill-prepared to organize or run them. The new generation of the retired, much better-off physically and intellectually to use their free time, would not be interested in programmes for the very old which they feel inappropriate for them. They are already involved in individual or inter-generational group activities, and may join the new clubs referred to earlier.

These programmes either stem from education « for » the retired, or they are complementary to them. They are often evolutive and open to other age groups. An arbitrary classification highlights the wide spectrum of these different collective or group educational activities below :

a) ***Health education***, often conducted in group sessions or lectures by different levels of health workers. The topics usually covered are,

- Information and suggestions for healthy living and nutrition ;
- Information on community and sexual life ;
- Advice on how to keep fit and maintenance of motor functions, sport and physical activity consistent with one's age ;
- Illness and diseases in old age, correct use of medicines, dangers of self-medication, certain advertisements ;
- Reflections on prejudices, taboos, and hardened habits ;
- Vaccines, prevention, medical check-ups ;
- Social security, hospital services... ;

b) ***Physical fitness and Sports*** activities are organized by several Federations, Departmental Directorates for Youth and Sports, to meet the needs of retired persons who are experiencing mental and behavioural changes,

- Different forms of gymnastics ;
- Group sports and games (more for the sake of gamesmanship than competition) ;
- Swimming, in open or closed pools, lakes, rivers or oceans ;

- Tennis, ping-pong and golf (for a minority) ;
- Walking, excursions, mountain trekking, nordic skiing ... ;
- Different kinds of dance meetings are also very popular ;

c) ***Artistic activities***

- Courses in painting, sculpture and music... ;
- Older adults choral groups are mushrooming everywhere and there are frequent festivals (many of which are intergenerational) ;
- Amateur theatre, mime and variety groups ... ;
- Organization of « Village Get-togethers », for all interested persons, research and interpretation of ancient and regional folk-lore, songs ;
- Preparation of confectionery from ancient recipes, using old instruments ;
- Organization of carnivals, parades, cavalcades, Traditional Peasants Days..., which always attract large crowds from the region. The elderly are often creators, organizers and active participants.

d) ***Artisanal activities*** are very much in demand, especially in the light of ecological trends of a return to nature, traditions, to the roots of society which has not kept pace with change often by refusing to accept technological evolution ;

e) ***Intellectual and Cultural education***

- Language courses, simply to gain knowledge, or in view of trips abroad, or with the object of transmitting languages learnt to one's children ;
- Exercising memory ;
- Learning Group Dynamics techniques ;
- Information on the new technologies and their application ;
- Courses on club or association management, family budget ;
- Courses in history, geography, history of art, local and regional life ;

- Information and organization of social and cultural tourism ;

On the other hand, the transmission of our cultural heritage to younger generations, which are part of these new demands, are giving older adults new status and recognition in their communities (they had lost for years) :

- Collective memory workshops in different centres, to tape or write down the recollections of older adults, or the historical, social and cultural anecdotes transmitted by ancestors, all of which are extremely precious for the future ;

- Collection and exhibition of post cards, stamps, letters, manuscripts, curios, musical instruments ;

- The retired play an important educational role in helping children, sick and handicapped people, or illiterates and immigrants, learn ;

- Creation and publication of inter-club or local newsletters ;

- Renewal of traditions, customs, old craftsmanship... ;

- Study and exploration of old archaelogical sites ;

The fact that these programmes are run on a voluntary basis should not make one forget that the development and extension of the Voluntary Movement is a universal panacea against not aging well, nor should it mask the risk of an abusive use of free manpower.

3 - *Access of Older Adults to New Technologies*

This domain is still too new to make any assessment of its future impact on the entire population, or more specifically on the older age group. It is not at all certain if the products of these new technologies are going to contribute to the development of new forms of communication between the older and younger generations. There is also the risk of their turning out to be short term novelties and amusing gadgets.

The motivation of certain older adults in wanting to initiate, and sometimes master a subject in order to become resource persons, (regardless of their social status or educational attainment) are many : curiosity, desire to retain contact with youth, understand the contemporary world and remain in the mainstream of society.

For the very old, it was more out of anxiety for their personal security that they allowed themselves to be initiated into using the telephone, which is now readily available ; the Minitel which is being distributed free in certain areas ; various types of tele-alarms which are enabling the isolated and handicapped older persons to remain independent much longer in their own homes. These two new techniques require some training for their use : how to use them ; their judicious use especially with regard to the number and length of calls often resulting in high bills which may put in jeopardy the already meagre financial resources of untrained older persons.

The audio-visual is an innovative technique in so far as the hidden face of images and sounds surrounding both auditors and spectators receiving, assimilating and sometimes profiting from the message diffused, which may have an impact on their daily lives.

Many of the older adults have their own radios and televisions and some a tape recorder or projector, or may have access to one in their club.

Several video studios have been established in Universities of the Third Age for the production of documentaries on regional themes relating to the plastic arts, natural and wild-life reserves, whose scenarios have been written by older adults, and the commentaries and interviews are carried out by them.

Certain courses have been initiated by the Departmental Committees for the Retired Persons and the Elderly, regional federations of clubs, pension funds, and mutual benefit societies. Trained older « technicians » have become voluntary and itinerant workers in the service of other older persons in rural clubs. Experiments conducted on these lines in residences and retirement homes have proved a success, with some of the residents being trained with the help of technicians.

An increasing number of the retired adults are attending courses in computer sciences, especially initiation into the use of micro computers. While this new technology may risk discouraging the older layman with no previous experience in this field, some are very enthusiastic upon initiation to Basic, word processing, programming and using certain games, producing graphics or music.

4 - *Educational Programmes for the Dependent Elderly (at Home or in Institutions)*

For some years the French social and medical institutions for the dependent and disoriented elderly, are opening up their doors to

teams of outside specialists (doctors, sociologists, psychologists, psycho-gerontologists, cultural groups leaders... usually assisted by the regular staff of these institutions and volunteers) proposing innovative and experimental educational programmes. In this manner, education and re-education are complementary to each other.

This innovative approach aims to develop the physical, psychic and intellectual functions of older persons whose condition was hitherto considered irreversible.

It is largely on account of these programmes that many such persons are once again coming back to life, rediscovering their mobility, renewing interpersonal contacts ; an improvement which one had hoped for, is often becoming a reality for the dependent elderly who are able to return home.

For older persons not wishing to leave their own or family homes, access to and availability of certain educational programmes covering physical, psychological rehabilitation and cultural aspects in their homes, is an assurance against apathy to which many of the severely handicapped and bed-ridden may be prone. These programmes are conducted by teams of nurses, home-help auxiliaries, volunteers from clubs or associations, and especially the family when its action is in close coordination with the professional teams.

In spite of the innovative nature of these programmes, they are in fact quite simple and easily transmissible to a very wide category of persons wishing to care for the elderly.

- Older adults trained in these techniques from rural or urban clubs, associations for the retired persons, and also the young, go beyond the age old practice of simply calling on older persons, to bringing them books and cassettes in order to make them participate more meaningfully by reading to them or listening to tapes together at their bedside or arm-chair in their homes or institutions.

- Certain institutions have conversation group sessions, and encourage the involvement of the dependent elderly in art, music and ergo therapies, physical re-education in swimming pools and gymnastics. Others, have a special area, for instance a model kitchen, where older persons handicapped by illness relearn the common everyday gestures used at home.

EDUCATION ABOUT THE ELDERLY AND ON AGING

This education consists of a wide spectrum of activities ranging from the training of individuals and groups (family, neighbourhood, staff and auxiliaries responsible for provision of health care at home or in institutions, professionals from all disciplines), to a much broader approach utilizing the Mass Media in order to cover and sensitize the general public on the different stages and ways of life of older persons and on the process of aging.

There are many types of programmes, very varied in composition, transmission, location and targets, which are still ill-coordinated and scattered. One learns of their existence from the daily or weekly newspapers, specialized journals, in documentation centres, institutions, or at colloquiums. This education covers several fields :

1 - *Gerontology*

The attitudes, judgements and thoughts of every person on aging (well or badly) and inevitable death, are formed in early childhood and are usually based on what one hears, sees and understands about the elderly from the older members of one's family or the community. If this informal self-education on old age is not given proper direction, revised and corrected (if the indifference, anxiety and repulsion persist), then neither their own lives nor their attitudes towards the old will change.

Even the gerontologists, whatever their basic professional background, are not immune to the prejudices on old age which dominate their culture, and project a fear of contamination resulting in the putting aside, « segregation » and shutting up of the old infected with this « serious disease » : old age is for others, and against which Society must take its precautions.

For those who overcome their fears spontaneously or by reasoning and choose to study Gerontology or other related sciences, the prospects are many. Courses, varying in quality and duration from place to place, are open to scientists, philosophers, men of letters, academics, professionals in the field of Aging and volunteers of all ages, in Gerontology, which may provisionally be defined as : « A field globally encompassing research, training and action on the process of aging, old age, older persons and populations, and the discussions, publications and speeches which it generates ». Geriatrics and policies on aging are included in this broad definition.

2 - *Educational Gerontology and Sporting Activities for the Elderly*

Educational Gerontology and Sporting Activities for the Elderly is a new area for research. Employing a multi-dimensional approach regarding phenomena linked to differentiated aging, it situates the notion of chronological age in its relative context (the criteria normally used for the homogenization of a given population) and places itself in the perspective of a permanent education of the motor functions.

While it has yet to be confirmed as Educational Gerontology, it does, however, open up new avenues in the educational process which allows any interested person, regardless his age or level of training, to carry out the exercises himself in harmony with his physical condition. As such, Educational Gerontology and Sporting Activities for the Elderly must be conceived as a component of development and equally as an element of education for life of individuals from their youngest age.

This new discipline, by taking into account the changes resulting from knowledge and experience acquired, as well as those from deficiencies and losses incurred during the process of aging, attempts to develop in individuals practicing it a spirit of independent self-management.

Nevertheless, what may appear acceptable at the level of intellectual activities and training programmes in Educational Gerontology for older learners, may be much less so when it comes to sporting activities. It is therefore important that properly drawn up programmes of physical education and sporting activities should be an integral part of Permanent Education programmes, thus enabling this new category of persons to better assume their advance in age and to discover new areas of interest which would stimulate their energy and make their retirement more meaningful. It has been noticed that older persons have trouble in making decisions on their own, especially when it comes to constructively organizing their activities, and prefer to opt for programmes that have been planned for them by others, which naturally makes them increasingly dependent on their entourage.

Results of research carried out on the biological - psychological - and sociological effects of different sporting activities, and also on the psycho-sociological profile of older sportsmen have been very positive.

They have shown that participation in sporting activities was beneficial on the cognitive, psychological and inter-personal contact

levels for older persons, particularly in rekindling their initiative, ability to make their own decisions, and developing in them a sense of responsibility towards themselves, others and their environment.

Among the other research projects currently underway is a study on « The Problem Autonomy-Dependency in the Context of Managing their Difference ». This particular project attempts to promote intergenerational communication (without jeopardizing the free expression of individual potentials within a heterogeneous group), either through « inter-age » sessions of corporal expression, or by the creation of « inter-social identity » activities between active and retired professionals in the perspective of self-evaluation.

3 - *Education for All the Other Persons Engaged in the Provision of Care for the Elderly*

This form of gerontological education for « grass-roots » level auxiliaries is very necessary particularly when they may often have to care for the dependent, senile and bed-ridden handicapped older persons.

These older adults (often very old) are the centre of a network of affective relations, care and services, reeducation, which assure a continuity of inter-personal communications indispensable to any educational project.

This affective, care and home help support is not strictly limited to functional relationships, but it is also a process of exchange which may surprise or teach others regardless of their state of dependency.

This basic education for all kinds of care givers should have a psychological component to help them understand how to approach, to relate, to listen, to remain silent, or to dialogue with the other. An education for accompanying and caring for the ill or the dying which is indispensable for all volunteers or professionals, is beginning to spread.

The category of persons who are given least attention, because it is close, is the family, which could often do with some training on lines similar to the care givers in order to facilitate the relationship of their relative with the practitioners. The family often needs moral support and evaluation of its behaviour so as to avoid making the older family member in their charge more vulnerable and dependent. To

meet this, Committees of families with dependent hospitalized older relatives have been formed.

The education of all these care givers also implies learning altruistically (how) to accept the ailing person, his illness, his suffering, his dementia, his death. Such educational and supportive programmes have been formulated and are now being offered to all categories of professionals and volunteers. However, they need to be further publicized, and of course, accepted.

4 - *Education Employing Audio-Visual Methods*

The use of audio-visual methods represents a potential for formal and informal education for persons of all ages, and more specially the fit and dependent older adults. The latter have all the time to listen to or watch programmes, but their passivity and acceptance of all that is offered, makes them an easy uncritical audience which ought to make the media more attentive and responsible in their regard.

The media often project a deformed and unrepresentative image of older adults, depicting them either as miserable or triumphant, when in reality they are certainly not interested in being sensational or performant ; neither do they try to preserve their youth by resorting to illusory commercial methods, nor do they wish to end their days in institutions resembling anti-chambers of death !

The too frequent anxiety to brush aside general information which one feels disturbs a youth and achievement oriented society founded on the money-material nexus, explains why the older age population is only referred to in specialized journals which are not diffused to the general public.

The mass media, however, have a very large older audience both on account of the demographic increase in this age group and also because of a rise in the number of people using these means of communication. A recent study has indicated sizeable increases in the number and the listening time of older audiences. Their interests range from news-current affairs, to serials and variety shows ; cultural and educational programmes, on the contrary, are less popular (which is also the case for younger audiences) as they require a more sustained effort. In this field, as in all the others, there is scope for educational and related activities, which could transform the lives of a number of the retired at all the stages of their advance in age.

PART THREE

FUTURE PROSPECTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FUTURE PROSPECTS

The present evolution of cultural habits of the young retired compared to those of older ones lead one to consider the future on two distinct lines :

- Are the existing educational infrastructures and programmes for older adults, created a decade ago or earlier, going to be suitable in the future as the retired persons of today prefer to attend the educational and cultural establishments they were used to during their working life ? The very idea of Education for the Elderly, therefore, is likely to give way to an education for adults much more in keeping with the changes individuals encounter during the different stages of adult life ;

- On the contrary, could this movement of the young retired persons merely be transitory, and due in large measure to their leaving the world of work much earlier and better educated than their predecessors ? A phase in which they would, no doubt, express the desire to profit from life and continue to feel useful up to, say, the age of 70 to 75 years, by when the older educational establishments for the retired would have adapted to better meet the needs and cultural aspirations of a new generation.

In any case, from either one or the other of these other educational and cultural activities, one must maintain education relating to the dependent elderly, whose numbers are continuing to increase and for whom these activities may well represent a hope for rehabilitation.

Education and culture in France are going to be increasingly decentralized in the future. This new trend is by no means limited to the elderly, but it ought (much more than before) to allow the adaptation of educational and cultural policies for the entire population at the regional and local levels, in order not to increase the strong disparities that exist as much on life expectancy as on standards of living, and also on infrastructures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of these future prospects, several recommendations have been formulated specifically with the socio-economic and cultural conditions of France in mind, and as such, they are not presented here as universal models. Every country must, in fact, draw up a global educational policy and programmes corresponding to the aging of its population and its cultural heritage.

The recommendations that follow are of two types :

The first group, represents the foundations necessary for the education of the elderly, which would assure the maintaining of their status as full-fledged citizens and human beings to the end of their days.

The second group, provides more details and explanations on the above potential measures and those that need to be developed to render the former recommendations operational.

1 - *General Recommendations*

• **Introduction of the dynamic of aging in education throughout the life span.** It is indispensable that individuals are sensitized to the physiological and psychological changes experienced during adulthood, (on lines similar to instruction imparted during childhood and adolescence), to help them adjust the tempo of their professional, educational and cultural activities to their capacities, as a move - in so far as they are able - to offset an accelerated aging. The responsibility for this prevention primarily lies with Society, which must both influence the widest number of institutions and also encourage individuals to take their own evolution in hand.

• **Continuity of education between the Working and Older Adults.** The relationship between culture and education should not undergo modifications during the transition to retirement. The Right To

Education of every inactive adult (retired persons, the unemployed, house-wives...) must be upheld ; and equivalent to that of the active working adults, even if the modalities are different. The demand for their right to training put forward by associations of retired persons in the context of Permanent Education - offered during professional life, well explains this desire for continuity in educational and cultural activities, thus bypassing the gap that exists between the status of the (active) working adults and the situation of inactivity.

• **Preserving the particular characteristics of older adults including those who are dependent**. This recommendation stems from the first, and it completes the second, as it expresses the *right to a difference* for certain groups of retired workers. The assertion of continuity for educational and cultural activities throughout life, is accompanied by the right of each consenting person, regardless of his age, to participate in such activities with persons of his or her age group. Continuity should by no means imply the mixing of everybody together, but rather, respect for individuals' freedom of choice.

On the other hand, the introduction of the dynamic of aging must also take into account the period referred to as *old age*, which ensures the provision and guarantee for a potential educational and cultural life, especially for dependent older persons.

• **Regionalization of educational and cultural Action.** This recommendation must be understood in its duality. The geographic regionalization of educational and cultural action, for both the older and younger adults, must develop further in the ongoing process of decentralization, in order to revitalize ancient regional cultural heritages. On the other hand, a « sociological reorganization » must also exist, that is to say, the right to cultural activities of certain groups by no means infers a dispossession or cultural poverty, but rather the preservation of their identity with its own hardly visible culture, also equally important to them.

Wanting, at all costs, to integrate the dominated classes in a system for correction or redressment of cultural behaviour is a risk inherent in every desire to educate, against which one must constantly be on guard.

2 - *Specific Recommendations*

• **Facilitate Access to Cultural Infrastructures and Programmes.** For the retired, the gain in free time is also commensurate to a financial loss. This should be kept in mind for the participation of the

retired workers and the elderly in culture, in order to limit the decline in their activities which are in part due to financial restrictions. Much remains to be done to facilitate their access to libraries, cooperatives, cultural, sports and games centres so that they may also profit from the continuing expansion of such institutions.

• **Establishment of Counselling Services for the Elderly in Universities** for „non-traditional students (over 30 or 35 years), and particularly to help the older student choose courses adapted to their tastes and desires. Every university is capable of setting up such a service : simple help to get them started at the beginning, follow up of older students for several months to assure their integration, orientation either towards regular courses as both credit or non-credit students, or on the contrary towards courses exclusively for them (physical activities for the retired persons in the regular sports programmes of universities, for example, or in cultural activities which would help their future integration in the regular courses with younger students).

• **The expansion and diversification of Educational Establishments** for the elderly, particularly those in which they would be able to exercise their role as « actors » of cultural and educational action. (In addition to the associations, clubs, agencies for the elderly, one must add the other establishments such as ... social centres, kindergarten and primary schools... This diversity of establishments should be conducive to involving a much wider and different category of persons, each time with specifically tailored educational methods, and appropriate training.

• **The numerous existing (public and private) community and neighbourhood infrastructures should be made more accessible** by opening up their doors to a new public without upsetting their normal operations. Two ways in which this can be achieved are by promoting and facilitating the access of the elderly to a variety of different « infrastructures and services » normally reserved for younger age groups ; or conversely, by opening up services exclusively for older persons to younger generations. This recommendation may be further strengthened by the expansion and establishment of « Grouped Association Centres » in the communes which would also include groups and associations of the elderly, and as such, be places where they could exercise their civic rights.

• **Committees and Councils of Residents projected in every collective sheltered housing complex (retirement homes, hospitals)** must, in liaison with the « Institutionalized Relatives' Family Associations », be encouraged to participate in the running of educational and cultural

programmes, especially for the dependent residents. This new role for the above Associations goes far beyond their actual practice which is limited to lobbying. This model may also be transplanted at the level of clubs in neighbourhoods or villages in order to give an opportunity to their members of bringing educational programmes within the reach of the temporary or permanently handicapped older persons confined to their homes (the club member visits the homebound person in question).

• **The promotion of different types of accompanying services for families** to counsel them on the ways and means of improving their relationships with their dependent older family members.

• **The creation of a Central Data Bank** would furnish information, (for example, using technical sheets/index cards) to adults of all ages on the existing legislation, associations, community services and infrastructures ; and also bring to their attention the pilot educational programmes, cultural activities for the elderly as well as those conducted by them which until now are little known since they are scattered throughout France. This Central Bank must naturally be an integral component of the present decentralization, and should subsequently establish a network of organizations for individuals who do not have access to the regular programmes of Permanent Education.

• **The Mass Media (Press, Radio, Television) need to revise their strategy** with regard to the diffusion of educational and cultural information. Whether their target is a retired and elderly audience with its own specialized programmes, or the general public (whose repertoire may also include specialized items), the media must make sure that their message is not only better presented but also more adapted (bigger print, technical terms...) to their audiences. Furthermore, these different media must inform the general public about the process of aging in all its aspects, in contrast to the miserable image often portrayed which is only a fraction of the truth.

On the other hand, it is also necessary that both the younger and older adults learn to be more receptive to the information being diffused, because it is not enough to just ask the media to do their work properly, if simultaneously one does not stress the « resistance » of individuals to inform themselves and assimilate any useful information that is directed at them.

CONCLUSION

As we come to the end of this century, education has become one of the priorities for reflection in our societies, which J. Dumazedier has rightly referred to as « the Educational Societies ».

Education which finds its origins, among other things, in the need of industrial societies to have a literate work force which is able to decipher the technical manuals of their machines ; education at first limited to schoolgoing age but which has little by little extended over the whole period of working life giving rise to a new need : that of education. A need, naturally, felt to be particularly imperative by a large number of persons, social groups who find themselves excluded from all the financial outlays allocated to Permanent Education, which is the case of the retired workers since the Laws of 1971 and 1978 only concern workers... and matter of fact, younger workers !

This situation of exclusion may have been an acceptable explanation at a time when the age of retirement coincided with the age of death for many a worker, or according to the popular stereotype, one could not learn beyond a certain age.

But for a decade now, the situation has changed radically largely on account of a rise in life expectancy, but also due to the fact that people are retiring at much earlier ages than before.

And this, at a moment when the need and desire to learn have become a reality in our country as in all other societies for the workers, but also for those retired. Thus, the new institutions were created for the elderly, some of which are also open to other categories of the population. This is indeed a new phenomenon which no earlier society had ever experienced, and which no doubt because of its spontaneity, has taken a very particular form in going far beyond the framework and forms of traditional education.

It has, moreover, exploded the numerous antediluvian myths, especially the stereotypes referring to the impossibility of one learning beyond a certain (stipulated) age, which has led to a harmonious rapprochement between the old and the young. It has also brought into general focus the importance of intellectual, physical and manual activities at all stages of life, more specifically during the time of retirement wherein they contribute to a successful aging.

Little by little, the system of Permanent Education has implanted itself throughout France, in its varied forms, easily distinguishable from traditional education and professional training since it is representative of a totally disinterested educational and cultural action divorced from production, but in direct rapport with the « desire to learn » inherent in each person which may find expression in a multitude of forms.

Furthermore, the retired have unwittingly put in doubt the nature of education itself in an industrial society, as work is no longer its sole objective, hence, it is neither limited in time any more. In parallel to traditional courses, « self-directed learning » groups, « learning communities » and even « convivial learning groups » have been constituted, whose originality is that they unite the working adults and the retired ones in the study of questions and disciplines chosen jointly. This common pursuit of knowledge, pooling of know-how hold much promise for the future of our societies. It is indeed in this direction that we will find solutions to the crisis faced by the educational systems in our industrial societies.

All this is confirmation of T.S. Elliot's famous words : « Old men are explorers ». « Explorers » indeed in virgin territories and new methods, not only « throughout one's life span, but also throughout many long lives » to quote Bernice Neugarten.

Finally, the generalization of education for the retired will provide the elderly opportunities for new roles in the life of their communities. In fact, it is perhaps this trend which may reduce the polarization which risks to become acute as a result of the steady reduction in the number of individuals « condemned » to work, and the mounting cohorts of all those who are condemned by age into inactivity or leisure... but also into learning !

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